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ABSTRACT

This practicum sought to develop a video-based orientation program for a day care center. A one-time orientation meeting was not feasible for this community college-based center, due to flexible scheduling, staggered starting dates of new staff, and a diverse staff. An increase in staff size, space, and enrollment intensified the already difficult task of providing an effective and meaningful orientation program. These conditions necessitated an individualized approach to orientation that incorporated a knowledge base of six information goals: (1) physical features of the center; (2) educational philosophy; (3) staff role; (4) professional relationships; (5) center procedures; and (6) teaching strategies. Three videotapes incorporating the six goals were produced during the summer of 1993 and used for staff orientation in the fall semester. Compared with the semester before the video orientation program was implemented, staff cohesion and knowledge improved, and new staff were more confident in their assigned roles. A posttest found that 90 percent of the new staff had a working knowledge of the six information goals. (Five appendixes include a practicum verification form, staff questionnaires, results of staff self-evaluations, and discussion questions that accompanied the second videotape.) (MDM)

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ED 373 867

Development of a Flexible Orientation Program for the Diverse Staff of the Westmoreland County Community College Child Development Center

by

Patricia Sheridan

Cohort 55

A Practicum Report Presented to the
Master's Programs in Child Care, Youth Care, and Family Support
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science

Nova University

1993

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

11/5/93 — **Date**

Patricia Sheridan — **Signature of Student**

Abstract

Development of a Flexible Staff Orientation Program for the Diverse Staff of the Westmoreland County Community College Child Development Center. Sheridan, Patricia A., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Master's Program for Child Care Administrators. Descriptors: Campus-Based Staff Orientation/Staff Orientation/Center-Based Staff Orientation/Work Study Student Orientation/Video Delivery of a Staff Orientation Program/Early Childhood Staff Training/Use of Video in Staff Orientation/Video Staff Orientation/ Practicum Student Orientation.

An increase in staff size, space, and enrollment in a campus-based child care setting intensified the already difficult task of providing an effective and meaningful orientation program to a diversified staff.

Staggered start dates of new staff demanded an individualized approach to orientation which incorporated a knowledge base of six information goals. These included: physical features, educational philosophy, staff role, professional relationships, center procedures and routines, and teaching strategies.

The author, with the technical assistance of the media support staff, the media technology instructor, and several work study students, developed and implemented three locally produced videotape staff orientations for use in a center where one-time orientation is not possible because of flex-scheduling, diverse staff, and staggered hours. The strategy took place over the summer months of 1993.

All new staff experienced the orientation which was implemented in the fall semester 1993. Staff cohesion improved; and children's needs were met quickly because of a sense of belonging and confidence among the new staff members. Evaluation of the orientation indicated that 90% of the new staff had a working knowledge base of the six information goals. This strategy will be a part of future staff orientation programs. Appendices include a reaction questionnaire, parent permission to video form, and discussion questions.

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Chapter 1

The Setting in Which the Problem Occurred

The setting for this proposal was a campus-based child development center within a comprehensive community college. The student body consisted of 7000 students whose average age was about 29 years old. Most of the students were first generation college students. This community college was located in a county with a population of approximately 285,000 persons. The county was experiencing fundamental changes in outmigration from a nearby metropolitan area resulting in a shift from a rural/small town environment to one characterized by the proliferation of suburban lifestyles. Tract housing, numerous malls, apartments and townhouses were being built as the population grew. In addition to the community college, this county was home to a branch campus of each of the major state universities and two private liberal arts colleges.

This campus child care center served approximately 90 3-6year old children per semester whose parents were enrolled in classes at the college. Thirty-nine percent of the parent fees were subsidized through the welfare department. Federal grants and loans subsidized 40% of the parent fees. Children of the college staff and faculty comprised about 3% of the total enrollment and paid a slightly

higher fee than the students.

The Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children and Youth, was the state regulatory agency governing the licensing of family and center day care facilities. An allocation of 40 square feet of space per child exclusive of halls, kitchens, bathrooms, and offices, determined that this campus center could serve 40 children per hour. In addition to space regulations, a safe environment was a prime consideration for licensing compliance. Staff credentials included educational background as well as experiential background to qualify for positions of director, head teacher, assistant teacher, aide, or secretary. All staff needed fire safety training, annual health appraisals, a Mantoux test for tuberculosis biannually, first aid and CPR training, and an annual 6 hours of training workshops. Anyone hired after January 1986 needed Act 33 and 34 clearances which were processed through the state police and the Department of Public Welfare respectively. These clearances provided proof that prospective staff did not have criminal records and had never been convicted for child abuse. Annual licensing inspections to prove compliance with the regulations were required.

The Center was a not-for-profit organization operated by the College as an auxiliary enterprise. Revenues were generated from annual parent fees, a percentage from the food vending

machine company, and a small allocation from the Student Government Association.

Expenses included the FT salaries and fringe benefits of the director, two head teachers, and the PT salary of a clerical position. Additional staff was comprised of two senior aides whose salaries were funded through a job training grant, and twelve work study students whose salaries were also paid through a federal student-need-based grant. Thus, the age range of the staff was 18 years through 74 years. The range of education, training, and values were similarly diverse. Some of the staff had completed eighth grade educations and some had completed one to eight semesters of college courses. The director of the center had a B.S. degree in elementary education and was completing a masters degree in early childhood administration. One of the head teachers had completed a baccalaureate degree in elementary education. The other head teacher had completed a baccalaureate degree in home economics with a concentration in child development. Collectively, the three educators had 45 years of experience in the field of early childhood.

Practicum students were assigned to the center on a semester basis and completed the configuration of the staff. The number of practicum students assigned to the center during spring semester 1993 totalled 13 Level II students. Level II practicum students were in the final

semester of their associate degree training program. Practicum II students were required to implement lessons to individuals, small groups, and large groups of children in graduated exposure and included all areas of the prescribed curriculum. Near the end of the semester, each practicum student facilitated a total teaching day without the help of the head teachers. Level I students assigned to the fall semester completed requirements to observe, write anecdotal records, and perform teaching functions to individuals and small groups. It became an additional duty of the Head Teachers to evaluate the performance of these students while mentoring and aiding in the planning of the students' experience.

The Author's Role in the Setting

Within the context of the management and operation of this campus-based child development center, there were many roles and functions to perform. The writer of this proposal was also the director of the center. As mentioned above, her educational background included a B.S. degree in elementary education, thirty-one credits toward a masters degree in early childhood administration, and thirty-five years of experience working with children in many capacities.

The role of the director in a child care setting on a college campus is multi-faceted. The responsibilities of the

director of this center included developing and proposing an annual operating budget, interacting with the college administration and faculty, reporting to the Vice President of Academic Affairs, interviewing and hiring the new work study student staff each semester, interviewing and recommending new professional staff as necessary, developing the curriculum with the help of the head teachers, supervising and evaluating the head teachers and secretary, training and orientation for all staff, conducting parent and child orientations and visits, conducting orientation and training meetings for work study and practicum students, scheduling children using returning students' requests and the waiting list, billing accounts in conjunction with the accounting department, serving on the advisory board for the Child Care Associate Degree program, and teaching a management class for the program.

It was the responsibility of the director of the center to design and implement an orientation program for the practicum students assigned each semester. The writer was using her Nova practicum experience as an opportunity to design an effective, ongoing orientation for these students assigned to the center.

Chapter 2: Study of the Problem

Problem Statement

The expansion of the child development center facility during the 1991-92 academic year and the corresponding increase in staff size was one factor which complicated staff orientation. The decision to assign all college practicum students to the center further challenged the director's ability to provide an effective orientation program each semester.

There was a lack of time for an effective orientation program for the many new staff members assigned after the start of each semester. Staff members who began to work after the first day of the semester did not all start on the same day. Start days of new staff were staggered for many reasons. In reality, an orientation was conducted on an almost daily basis. This was ineffective use of the director's limited time and there needed to be a more accountable method for the orientation process.

The time factor did not allow a thorough coverage of all basic guidelines to be presented to each new staff member nor did it allow time for feedback. There was also the margin of error that occured when the new staff member was unsure of his/her role in the setting.

Documentation of the Problem

Previous to the implementation of this practicum activity, an orientation staff meeting was held the week before the beginning of each semester. A problem occurred each semester as new work study students and practicum students were often not assigned until the second or third week of the semester and therefore, did not attend this orientation meeting.

Much of the director's time and the time of the head teachers was spent, during the early weeks of each semester, providing information and training to new practicum and work study students on a need-to-know, individual basis.

The flex-scheduling method peculiar to campus child care centers was a contributing factor to the problem. Each hour, children and parents came and went, and many hours during the day, there was a change of on-duty staff as they came and went to their classes. Enrollment figures for children totalled **94** in the spring '93 semester. Of these 94 children and parents, **34** were first-time enrollees. At the same time,the number of new work study students totalled **nine**, and the assigned Practicum II students totalled **thirteen**. The number of students in attendance at the pre-semester orientation meeting was **eleven**. Thus, **eleven** students needed an individual orientation meeting with the director.

Not only did the dynamics of the groups of children change throughout the day but the configuration of the staff did also. Each staff member set up his/her own schedule. Thus, each staff member who came at varied times and days throughout the week met different groups of children at these times. Flex-scheduling was practiced with parents' class schedules as the determining factor of the child's enrolled hours each day.

Individualized staff orientations conducted by the director alone were no longer a viable option.

There had been a rapid growth in space, enrollment, and staff over the last two years. The space doubled in size, the total enrollment was 60% larger, increasing from 54 children to 90 children/semester. Table I depicts the increase in the staff in two years.

Table I

	1991	1993
Director	1	1
Head Teacher	1	2
Clerical PT	1	1
Work Study Students	5	14
Practicum Students	2	13-17
Senior Citizens	3	1

This rapid increase in the numbers of the staff was a real contributing factor to the problem of training each semester. It was reflected in the number of questions from each work study and practicum student on procedures and techniques to use. Practicum students had also expressed concern to their instructor about the complex nature and the numbers of people in the Center operation.

Evaluations of the center done by the practicum II students at the end of the semester reflected satisfaction with the child oriented, child initiated curriculum, the excellence of the master teachers, a good rapport with the parents, and a setting in which they could employ the theories learned in the classroom with the coaching help of the teachers. Yet, these evaluations targeted one area of concern. The nine practicum students who did not attend the initial orientation meeting expressed feelings of bewilderment, being out of place, lack of knowledge of routines, the physical site, the other staff members, the children's names, and their own role in this setting.

Much extra burden was placed on the teachers and the director to individualize the orientation and encourage a sense of belonging. The attempts were rewarded when, at the middle of March, the practicum students began to respond to their instructor that at last, they felt as though they belonged.

Analysis of the Problem

Each semester, there were new untrained staff members to learn classroom management techniques, teaching strategies, and daily routines. A review of the literature cited on-the-job training by a mentor as the most successful and effective orientation training. This mentoring support system is effective because of regular interactions and feedback (Scherm, 1988). It was a process to inform teachers of new curriculum and teaching strategies.

In addition to the use of workshops, consultants, conferences, and classes, Kostelnik (1980) also credited on-the-job training as inexpensive and practical. On-the-job training was practiced at the campus-based child development center in which the writer was employed. This type of training was inexpensive and effective.

Emphasis was placed on orientation and enhancement of existing or former knowledge and instruction in the field instead of new training as sufficient for staff development (Bramwell, 1979). Since this was written in 1979, many studies and pilot programs have been designed to include interns and new staff members in the evaluation of the training process. Scherm (1988) rated a self-appraisal of accountability, of planning, and preparing lessons and the classroom for the interns done in the form of checklists

or self-evaluation forms co-signed by a supervisor as an effective orientation tool as did Bramwell (1979) and Wilson (1991).

The writer concurred with this viewpoint and had used on-the-job training for 10 years with moderate success. The head teachers devoted approximately 80% of their time modeling acceptable teaching strategies, conferencing, and planning with the interns of the college. Guerrero (1989) found that interns consistently preferred hands-on-training. The writer further paralleled Guerrero's (1989) findings that interns found watching other teachers teach most helpful. Time constraints as well as an overwhelming number of practicum students and new untrained staff dictated a need for a more individualized **initial** orientation.

At the conclusion of each semester, the practicum students at the center exuded self-confidence and "belonging". They were part of the team. The supportive role played by the head teachers enabled this self-confidence to grow in the intern as each competence was gained through practice. There was strong evidence that in addition to competence and self-confidence, self-direction and professionalism were enhanced when direct assistance and feedback was offered to the intern by the mentor (Scherm, 1988).

According to Washington and Oyemade (1984), teachers who

had developed a variety of methods were more effective in the operation of the classroom. The contrast between the experienced and inexperienced teachers in the center proved this theory to be correct. The inexperienced teachers had little or no knowledge of the on-the-job practitioner strategies, even though they had accumulated credits or theories academically. This exacted a heavy toll on the head teachers who also had to begin anew to share their experience and teaching strategies each semester with so many new students. This point was recognized by Katz (1984) when she indicated that non-professionals applied less than adequate solutions for solving learning problems with children. She also stated that a variety of classroom techniques required ~~by~~ early childhood teachers to use advanced knowledge and professional judgment. This knowledge and judgment only occurred through much exposure and experience with teaching young children on-the-job.

Quality day care is linked with educational background of the staff. A national standard for quality programming for young children is the extent to which knowledge of child development is applied to program practices (Bredekamp, 1991).

Regulaions of minimum daycare standards by the states played a role in the quality offered for staff development and services rendered (Willie, 1982). An analysis of

quality instruction done by Judge (1989) indicated a lack of a good mixture of theoretical and practical skills.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children cited a combination of child development theoretical preparation with practical teaching experience as criteria necessary to achieve quality programs (Bredekamp, 1991). Wilson (1991) felt insufficient training was one of the two factors affecting lack of knowledge on the part of workers in the child care field. Results of a twenty year study by the Vermont State Board of Education showed that high quality child development experience had positive effects on three to five year olds that lasted into high school (Lengel, 1989).

The practicum students assigned to the center each semester had a solid theoretical base of knowledge appropriate to the developmental curriculum practiced there. The missing link was the timing of the orientation to familiarize them with the physical setting, the routines, and the educational philosophy practiced at the center. The delay of the students in feeling comfortable and confident affected the quality of the program.

The literature was replete with analyses and surveys on ways to strategize the solution to the problem of how to effect the training so sorely needed among the core of child care workers in the nation. One such study performed by Chrisman & Couchenour (1988) found that communication skills were paramount in an effective solution.

Katz (1979) suggested that the following six points were very important in designing a staff development program:

1. Focus on the teacher's task at hand.
2. Focus on strengthening enduring dispositions.
3. Focus on competencies already accrued.
4. Focus on building long-term relationships.
5. Focus on maintaining appropriate distance between trainer and trainee.
6. Focus on providing moderate amounts of inspiration.

The development of a pre-service orientation program was extremely important if new staff members were to develop an open attitude and a feeling of trust. To accomplish this trust, risks needed to be taken. Susan Loucks-Horsley (1987) made the following observation: "The ability to take the risks necessary to teach well, and to find support in failure as well as in success, demands a trusting

environment for learning. For teachers as well as students, trying something new often means experiencing discomfort. It may mean getting worse before getting better. The perseverance needed to get beyond adequate performance to efficient, graceful form can be staggering." (p.18).

Different types of self-evaluation forms were incorporated into all the staff orientation programs reviewed in the literature. In Shreders (1990), a pretest and a posttest were administered to the staff in the training program. Bramwell (1979) developed training material for the trainee to take the responsibility for his/her own training by participating in planning a self-evaluation.

In the Georgia Department of Education training program, a checklist was used by trainees to self-evaluate classroom preparation, storage space, and accountability for implementing policies (Scherm, 1988).

As a model for helping the intern or new trainee, there was no substitute for on-the-job orientation with an experienced master teacher. This master teacher described rather than judged, pointed out specific causes and effects, and shared ideas rather than gave advice (Brzosko, 1987). Brzosko offered one additional suggestion for positive feedback for positive feedback to a trainee, that of a self-critiqued video of the trainee. This warranted consideration as a valid technique for staff development training.

Fowler(1983) stated that the director must develop and implement an orientation for new staff members prior to their first day of working in the center. (p.77). In the practicum, the writer developed a video depicting appropriate teaching strategies, available to be viewed before the first day of work by the new staff member. It presented an introduction to the physical setting, the role of the adult, teachers interacting with children discipline, and proper use of materials.

Among the **basic** staff orientation topics suggested by Fowler (1983) were the following:

..A review of all staff procedures manuals and all significant forms used by the staff.

..An overview of all staff responsibilities and center schedules and routines.

..An introduction to all staff members.

..A review of parent regulations and expectations.

..A review of parent regulations and expectations.

..A familiarization of all parts of the facility, including the learning areas, the playground, and the washroom. (p.78).

A second and **more involved** phase of the orientation prescribed by Fowler (1983) included these more sophisticated areas:

..observation of the classroom in operation with the children in place.

..developing an understanding of group needs and individual child needs.

..the necessity of correct voice level and positive direction.

..the importance of transitional activities.

..the value of establishing routines and the communication among the staff in the classroom at any time.

..proper techniques for greeting parent and child.

..the method for keeping notes on individual children.

..the very important need for professional behavior in all dealings with parents, children, and other staff members. (p.78).

Brazel, Kalinowski, and Drumond (1985) supported the use of **videotape** to provide information to teachers.

Davis-Dike (1987) found that Florida State University Center for Instructional Development and Services used **video** to develop a training program for unemployed adults. The use of a videotape for staff orientation was favored by Davis-Dike. "Adaptive behaviors might also be improved with the use of a prepared video introduction to orientation to the observation class experience" (Davis-Dike, 1987, p.66). She felt that such an orientation tape could be developed and made available to new students befor the start of each session.

The only somewhat similar video orientation model to the one proposed by the writer found in the literature review was the one developed by Davis-Dike (1987). She developed an orientation video for a child care observation class of adult learners. The Davis-Dike tape was a ten minute orientation which contained material on: class sessions, staff schedules, child activities, program goals and logistical information such as parking regulations (p.71). Although the Davis-Dike tape was designed to be viewed by new students before entering the observation room, there was no check-list for use with the tape and the students were not required to review reactions to the tape with the instructor.

A review of the literature described the importance of the staff orientation to the success of the Child Development Center. Further examples of communication of task and role to new staff through mentoring and direct experience were shown. Models of orientation through media and self-administered checklists were found in the literature. This was the type of orientation program the writer developed.

Chapter 3: Goals and Objectives

Goal 1. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to all the **physical features** of the center.

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the rules of the playground.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the rules and use of the washroom.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the use and rules of the observation room.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the use and staffing of each classroom.

Objective 5. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the use and purpose of both offices.

Objective 6. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the use of the kitchen area of the center.

Objective 7. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding each of the storage areas of the center.

Goal 2. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to the **educational philosophy** of the center.

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the importance of child-centered interest areas for cognitive, social, physical, and emotional growth.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the importance of play in the curriculum for social and emotional growth.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the importance of child-initiated, open-ended activities for creative expression and language development.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with information about the importance of helping the children to develop a tolerance for individuals different from themselves.

Objective 5. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with the important idea that using positive discipline methods where the children are led (or fed the words to use) ~~to~~ help them to problem-solve on their own.

Goal 3. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to some of the various **teaching strategies** used in the center.

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with information about the necessity of a prepared environment as a discipline measure and a teaching tool with accessibility of materials at the child's level.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with the specific information about the importance of the use of observation as a teaching tool.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with specific information about the importance of documentation of children's behaviors to ascertain goals for individualized curriculum plans.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with specific information regarding the concept of interacting with the children to achieve a trust relationship.

Objective 5. By August 23, each new staff member was given information about the importance of focusing on positive behaviors of the children.

Objective 6. By August 23, each new staff member was given information on some teaching strategies employed with a large group, a small group, and an individual.

Objective 7. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information on the technique called "shadowing" or "the buddy system" whereby a very young child or a developmentally delayed child is assigned his own teacher to guide him/her to a new readiness stage in social growth.

Objective 8. By August 23, each new staff member was given information about the importance of being able to "read the child".

Objective 9. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information on the center's discipline policy whereby children are encouraged to use their words to solve problems and are "fed" words from the teacher to help them think through solutions.

Goal 4. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to his/her **role** within the center.

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information concerning the importance of the tone and level of voice used when interacting with children.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with information about the use of positive guidance with the children.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was presented with the important information about the use of eye contact with the children which necessitates getting down to the child's level.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was given information regarding his/her role in the art of facilitating play.

Objective 5. By August 23, each new staff member ~~will~~ has given information regarding specific duties required to assist the teacher in his/her assigned classroom.

Objective 6. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the required part he/she plays at group time.

Objective 7. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the need to interact with the children assigned to his/her lunch table.

Objective 8. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about his/her role during rest time.

Goal 5. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to the nature of the various **professional relationships** involved among the center staff.

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the importance of positive communication among the staff to build a team effort.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the necessity for confidentiality of incidents and behaviors in the center.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information to help him/her to understand the specific role of each staff member: the director, the head teachers, the assistant teachers, the aides (which include some work study students and the senior citizens) and the secretary.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding proper channels of communication with the parents.

Goal 6. Before beginning to serve in the center, each new staff member was introduced to center **procedures and routines.**

Objective 1. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information about the importance of greeting each child and parent upon entering the classroom.

Objective 2. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the duties assigned to him/her during the lunch routine.

Objective 3. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding duties of the staff person on the playground.

Objective 4. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the routines surrounding the daily schedule, including transition times.

Objective 5. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the cleaning responsibilities of the staff at the center.

Objective 6. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding proper use of the telephone and proper telephone procedures in handling incoming calls.

Objective 7. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the description and placement of returned forms to the center from parents.

Objective 8. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the procedures used to place names on the waiting list and the acceptance procedures.

Objective 9. By August 23, each new staff member was given specific information regarding the storage of medications in the locked box in the refrigerator and the accompanying forms necessary to be completed by the parent on the day of medicine dispensing.

Existing Programs, Models, Approaches

Professional literature indicated the importance of and emphasis on orientation for staff development (Bramwell, 1979). The development of a trusting environment as a prerequisite for the young professional to learn new skills was noted by Loucks-Horsley (1987). Fowler (1983) indicated the importance of an orientation program for new staff before they began working in a child care center.

Davis-Dike found that the development of a short video-taped orientation program was effective in meeting the need for a pre-service orientation for new staff members who began at a variety of times inconvenient to a single group orientation program. (1987).

In her work, Davis-Dike discovered that Florida State University used interactive video programs for staff training. (1987). Support for video to provide information to teachers was also provided by Brazel, Kallinowski, and Drumond (1985).

An exact model of an orientation program was not found by this writer in the review of the literature. Although Davis-Dike utilized a video orientation, it was more limited in scope as it was developed for observers of a child care facility, not for actual center staff. (1987).

Strategy Employed

The writer recognized, accepted, and supported a strategy of providing a comprehensive orientation program to all new staff members before they began to serve in the child development center.

At the same time, the innovative use of a video-taped orientation program was used to make the program available at any reasonable time to new staff members. The writer developed a comprehensive orientation program which was delivered on videotape. The program included all of the information needs identified in the goals and objectives section of this paper. This solution strategy enabled the writer to provide an orientation program to all new staff members, regardless of their work schedules and starting dates.

The solution strategy also included a reaction questionnaire completed by all new staff members after viewing the videotape. This checklist served as the basis for a review discussion of the orientation material between each new staff member and the director.

The role of the director/administrator of the child development center enabled and required the writer to assume leadership to provide an orientation program for the center staff. The determination of content, scope, and delivery method of the orientation program was covered by the specific duties noted in the job description of the director of the center.

The writer entered into a cooperative relationship with other members of the college staff to acquire a quality finished product. These staff members had technical expertise in video equipment, editing, and combining script, music, and film. Some of these college staff were the director of the media services, the professor of the computer-laser technology department ~~technology department~~, the secretary in the Communications/Public Service Division, as well as two work-study students in the media and computer laser technology programs who would be interested in implementing this videotape as part of their class project.

However, organizational changes at the college delayed the availability of new personnel in charge of the video equipment, ~~and the equipment~~. As a result, the writer, with limited technical expertise and occasional help from a former student, produced the videotapes.

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Chapter 4. Results

Report of Action Taken

June and July 1993

The writer arranged an appointment with the Director of Media Services to review production of the video program and requested the use of the video equipment.This meeting took place on June 14, 1993. Video equipment for filming was made available to the writer by written request on the mornings it was needed for the months of June, July,and August, 1993 during hours and days of the summer school schedule.

The first task of the writer was to outline a script to be used in the videotape by June 15. Then, on June 15, 1993, the writer met with two selected Media students to discuss the general content requirements of the video program and to arrange filming schedules to coincide with their available schedules.

The media students conducted the actual filming Monday through Thursday between June 14 and July 26 while summer school was in session between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. One of these students had filmed scenes in the child development center from the Fall '92 and the Spring '93 semesters for a class project; these videos were added to the stockpile from which to choose. Parents were asked to return signed "permission to videotape" forms to the center prior to filming. See Appendix C.

The fourth task was to review all film taken to date to decide what scenes best depicted the outlined script. On July 15, after a complete review of the video tape footage, it was decided that it was necessary to take more footage to find the right combination of technical expertise of filming and expertise in child development knowledge to know when to stay with a scene or move to another episode of action going on at the time.This was perhaps the major stumbling block of the use of video: the inability of a skilled cameraman to portray answers that would be asked by a child development specialist and the inability of the early childhood specialist to use the video to its best advantage to depict a scene.

The second problem was that the microphone was attached to the camera, picking up sounds closest to the camera and not always the sounds accompanying the visual scene portrayed.

On August 5, the writer, with the help of three work study students, filmed the tours led by the head teachers, and between July 15 and August 5 ,filmed selected scenes of the children during the hours of 8:00-10:00 A.M. and 1:30-3:00P.M. when appropriate content presented itself. Also, the writer videotaped herself with the aid of a camera on a tripod to produce the script for the videotape.

There were organizational changes within the college community during the month of July which resulted in the

transfer of the media editing equipment used for synchronizing audio and video. This equipment was now in the domain of two faculty professors of the media support staff. This resulted in a two month delay for the implementation of the dubbing to occur. It also created a total dependency by the writer upon the technical assistance of the media students who had graduated on August 8, 1993, prior to the permissible use of the equipment. Schedule arrangements then had to be coordinated between the available free time of these students to return to campus and the non-class time of the current students in order to use the editing and dubbing equipment.

August 1993

On August 4, the writer, the media student, and the faculty professor met to arrange acceptable dates and times to dub the writer's script and to edit the films. These dates were moved back to the months of September and October. Consequently, the writer used the videotape at the August 19 orientation meeting without the audio script on the tape. Thus, the writer verbalized important points while the staff viewed the videotape for this first time.

Concurrently with the production of the video and based on a review of the video, the director produced a draft of the reaction questionnaire on August 6. On August 13, the head teachers reviewed with the director and concluded no revisions were necessary.

A professional format for the reaction questionnaire was designed by the director with the aid of the college-assigned secretary to the center and her Apple computer on August 18.

The director sent the finished questionnaire to the college copy center to produce in quantity on August 20.

Reaction questionnaires were distributed to all new center staff members at the third orientation meeting held on August 19, 1993 at 10:00A.M.-12:00P.M.

Dubbing and editing sessions occurred on October 26, November 2, and November 9 after much renegotiated schedule conflicts. The completed orientation training videotape contained information in all six areas of the outlined script. Length of viewing time was slightly over an hour.

The final task of drafting a questionnaire to use for discussion occurred on November 6. Since the videotape presented a wide spectrum and volume of content, it was decided by the writer to segmentize the discussion questionnaire to better evaluate its impact on the new staff. A decision was made to reduce the number of questions from 25 to 8. Questions 1 through 5 would pertain to the role of the adult in the classroom and the educational philosophy of the center. Questions 6 through 8 would focus on lunch, changing clothes, and storage procedures and routines.

On September 20, the media technology professor agreed to review the videotape in January 1994 and assign a Spring '94 video class the task of smoothing the transitions between scenes, adding audio, and revising this second orientation video to be interactive and in three parts.

There was a need for the inclusion of music in the videotape, but audio dubbing equipment was not available on November 9. It was the intention of the writer to use the voices and instruments of the children in the center since permission to use copyrighted music was not obtained.

It must be noted that orientation meeting #1 held in April was also videotaped for future use. This orientation included the distribution and explanation of necessary forms, room assignments, and a tour of the physical site. A third video depicting six vignettes of teaching strategies was made on November 9. These vignettes had been manually shown at Orientation Meeting #3 on August 19 as a more in-depth presentation of the adult role and teaching strategies used in the classroom.

Evaluation

The evaluation of the practicum project after implementation was accomplished by a review of the fall 1993 staff orientation program in two areas.

1. A color and sound video tape orientation program was completed and it included the following informational areas:

   a. the seven important physical features of the center listed under Goal 1 were introduced in Orientation Video #1.

   b. the five points of the educational philosophy of the center listed under Goal 2 were introduced in Orientation Video #2.

   c. the nine teaching strategies employed at the center listed under Goal 3 were introduced in Orientation Video #2 and stressed again in Orientation Video #3.

   d. the eight areas pertaining to the role of the adult in the center as listed under Goal 4 were introduced in Orientation Video #2 and Orientation Video #3.

   e. the four points pertaining to professional relationships within the center as listed under Goal 5 were introduced in Orientation Video #1.

   f. the nine procedures and routines of the center as listed under Goal 6 were introduced in Orientation Video #1.

2.A reaction questionnaire (Appendix B) to be used by those viewing the video orientation was completed and available for use. The reaction questions enabled each person viewing the video orientation tape to:

a.check their individual comfort zone of knowledge by responding to one of four choices for each area. These choices were: #1, minimal knowledge, #2, somewhat knowledgeable, or #3, very knowledgeable, or need more information.These choices addressed each of the six goals of the orientation video presentations.

b.Twenty-one work study and practicum students completed the orientation questionnaires; of this number only three students were returning from the previous semester. Three students did not attend the orientation meetings.

c.The results of this reaction questionnaire indicated the staff gained a thorough orientation. 83% indicated they were **very** knowledgable after viewing the tapes, while 7% indicated they were somewhat knowledgable. These results show a high success rate for the videotape orientations. Complete results of the reaction questionnaire are shown in Appendix D.

d.Answered eight questions pertaining to the information contained on the tape. The discussion that followed was indicative of a thorough understanding of the information presented.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Brief Review of the Problem

The expansion of the child development center in 1991 and the corresponding increase in staff size was a significant factor in intensifying the already difficult task of providing an effective and meaningful orientation program to a diversified staff.

The physical space was more than doubled as was the number of head teachers and student work study staff. Another critical factor was the decision of the college in 1991 to assign all practicum students to the center. The number of children permitted each hour increased from 25 to 43.

The great new demands on the director's time did not permit a complete face-to-face orientation program with each new staff member. This approach to orientation, which was practiced when the center was much smaller, was no longer workable.

The flex-scheduling of children in the center combined with the constant comings and goings of the largely part-time staff created a confusing situation which demanded a strong orientation for all new staff members.

Evaluations by students who had not experienced an orientation program showed initial bewilderment and a lack of knowledge of their role in the center.

Solution Strategy

A review of the literature concerning orientation strategy models used in child development centers with diverse staffing patterns was conducted by this writer. This review indicated that a locally prepared videotape orientation program could be a solution to the problem.

The specific solution strategy employed by the writer was to develop a flexible orientation program covering all the goals for staff orientation. This program was developed and implemented using a videotape presentation for flexible delivery to new staff members at various times and places.

Outcome Measures

The outcome measures essentially involved the production of a videotape orientation program covering the several orientation goals; and the successful delivery of this program to all new staff members beginning in the Fall '93 semester.

The knowledge goals covered in the orientation program were: physical features, educational philosophy, staff role, professional relationships, center procedures and routines, and teaching strategies.

Findings/Results/Implications

After implementation of the solution strategy in the form of a videotape orientation program beginning in the Fall '93 academic semester, a review indicated the following important points:

..the program contained material covering all of the six goals and attendant objectives.

..a reaction questionnaire completed by all staff who experienced the new orientation program showed that 90% felt knowledgable about all aspects contained in the program.

..the use of this flexible, locally produced, videotape orientation program met the needs of the writer and the center staff.

The writer plans to continue the use of this approach to staff orientation. The results were very positive and the overall staff cohesion was very strong. The writer found that although this program may later be improved, from a technical sense, the results of the initial use of this orientation program were completely positive.

Meanings and Interpretations

The first three-part staff orientation program was held PRIOR to the start date of the fall semester 1993. Orientation #1 was held in April and on July 19 and 20, 1993; Orientation #2 was held on August 5, 1993; and Orientation #3 was held on August 19, 1993.

The outcome of this videotape orientation project impacted the child development in a very positive way. Virtually, all staff members had the opportunity to view the three tapes. Those unable to attend the meeting on these dates made arrangements with the media department to view each tape missed.

Each new staff member was presented with complete information regarding the philosophy, the role of the adult, the physical features, professionalism, teaching strategies, and routines and procedures of the center.

Fowler (1983) cited a need for the director to develop and IMPLEMENT a staff orientation PRIOR to the first day of school.

Each new staff member was fortified with a preliminary knowledge of supplies storage, procedures for changing clothes, snack preparation, expectation of her individual role in the classroom, and the center philosophy of how children learn.

Both head teachers reported satisfaction with assigned students regarding their knowledge of daily routines, initiative to take risks, and their attitude toward interaction with children. Both teachers commented on the flow of the program being helped, not hindered, by the new staff who exercised appropriate practices, using a good foundation in child development knowledge.

They stressed the improvement from previous years. In the Spring '93 semester, it took two months from January till the middle of March for staff members to begin to have a sense of belonging, and they still relied heavily on directives from the head teachers.

The overall atmosphere generated by new staff was open, trusting, and cooperative. This validated Susan Loucks-Horsley's (1987) suggestion that an open attitude and feeling of trust are formed by teachers after risk-taking and finding support in some failures and some successes. The results of implementation of this program strongly support both Fowler (1983) and Loucks-Horsley (1987).

The program flowed like a well-oiled machine, allowing the director to pay attention to other matters. Children and parent needs were met as needed; no waiting time occurred for questions of new staff to be answered. Biweekly meetings were elevated beyond the elementary information stage. Meeting content focused instead on teaching strategies, problems which arose, referrals, and brainstorming sessions for overall program improvements.

The writer feels this approach would have merit in similar situations where one-time orientation is not possible because of flex-scheduling, diverse staff, and staggered hours. There is an added advantage to a center staff when the videotape is locally prepared. This ensures important points to be addressed and allows staff assistance in the development of the model.

This orientation model offers the opportunity to be delivered at various times and places; it is pre-prepared, completely covering all necessary points decided upon by existing staff. There is a flexibility of use, according to the schedule of the user. Most importantly, it is interactive, allowing the user to answer and write questions to determine feedback needed for understanding. Also, the self-evaluation allows the person to take responsibility for his/her own need for additional knowledge. Shreders (1990) endorsed self-evaluation with a pretest and a posttest. The Georgia Department of Education uses a self-evaluation checklist for trainees Scherm (1988).

Lack of personal technical knowledge by the writer was a little hindrance to the completion of the project.While very satisfied with the end result of the three videos, the writer will accept the offer of the newly hired media technology instructor to add music to the video #2 and

segmentize it, making video space for reaction questions at the end of each segment.

This locally produced orientation videotape has so positively impacted the child development center that the writer has made application to present a workshop at the National Coalition for Campus Child Care conference to be held in March 1994 to share this model used for staff orientation.

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VERIFICATION OF PRACTICUM PROJECT STATEMENTS

SECTION II - To be attached to the Practicum Report.

I verify that the below named student did conduct the practicum project described in the submitted Practicum Report and I attest to the fact that this practicum project was carried out by the student in a responsible, professional, and competent manner.

Practicum Title DEVELOPMENT OF A FLEXIBLE ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR THE DIVERSE STAFF OF THE WESTMORELAND COUNTY ~~COMMUNITY COLLEGE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER~~

Student's Name PATRICIA SHERIDAN **Cohort** 55

Verifier's Name BETH HODEN

Verifier's Position ASSISTANT PROF. EARLY CHILDHOOD

Relationship to Student CO-WORKERS

Name of Verifier's Work Setting W.C.C.C.

Address 413 FOUNDERS HALL

YOUNGWOOD (City) PA (State) 15697 (Zip)

Telephone Number 412 / 925-4113

Verifier's Signature Beth Hoden

Date 11-5-93

Please check the appropriate box that indicates **YOUR** comfort zone of knowledge about the following six (6) areas of the **WCCC Child Development Center** curriculum:
1 = minimal knowledge 2 - somewhat knowledgeable 3 = very knowledgeable

		Very 3	Some What 2	Minimal 1	Need More Information
I.	Physical Features				
A.	Rules of the playground	❑	❑	❑	❑
B.	Rules and use of the bathroom	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.	Rules and use of the observation room	❑	❑	❑	❑
D.	Use and staffing of each classroom	❑	❑	❑	❑
E.	Use and purpose of both offices	❑	❑	❑	❑
F.	Use of kitchen area	❑	❑	❑	❑
G.	Use of storage areas (closet, hall)	❑	❑	❑	❑

		3	2	1	Need More Information
II.	Professional Relationships				
A.	Positive communication among staff	❑	❑	❑	❑
B.	Confidentiality	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.	Job duties and role of each team member	❑	❑	❑	❑
D.	Proper channel of communication to parents	❑	❑	❑	❑

		3	2	1	Need More Information
III.	Educational Philosophy				
A.	Respect the child	❑	❑	❑	❑
B.	Child-centered interest areas for cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.	Importance of play	❑	❑	❑	❑
D.	Child-initiated, open-ended activities for creative expression & language development	❑	❑	❑	❑
E.	Help children to develop a tolerance for individuals different from themselves	❑	❑	❑	❑
F.	Positive discipline methods (use words)	❑	❑	❑	

VI.	Teaching Strategies:	3	2	1	Need More Information
A.	Prepared environment as discipline measure and teaching tool	❑	❑	❑	❑
B.	Use of observation as teaching tool (practicum manual)	❑	❑	❑	❑
C.	Use of Documentation as teaching tool	❑	❑	❑	❑
D.	Interact with children → trust	❑	❑	❑	❑
E.	Focus on positive behaviors of children	❑	❑	❑	❑
F.	Teaching strategies to employ with large group, a small group, and individual	❑	❑	❑	❑
G.	Buddy system - teacher guides an individual child to new readiness stage in social growth	❑	❑	❑	❑
H.	Importance to "read" the child	❑	❑	❑	❑
I.	Discipline policy - children need to use "words" to solve problems	❑	❑	❑	❑

October 5, 1993

Dear Parents:

WCCC Child Development Center is a lab school to train future Early Childhood educators and is an observation site for WCCC students from the Nursing & Psychology curriculums.

At present, I am making a training video for practicum and work study students. Also, a class from Media Technology is producing a slide presentation for parent and student orientation.

The purpose of the video and slide presentation is to depict the teacher/child interaction and the role of the adult in the Center.

Your permission is requested to include your child in this presentation. Please sign below if you give us permission to videotape your child.

Pat Sheridan
Coordinator
WCCC Child Development Center

- -

PERMISSION TO VIDEOTAPE AND PHOTOGRAPH

I give permission to WCCC Child Center and the Media Technology to videotape and/or photograph my child for staff training purposes. I understand that this videotape and slide presentation will be used for staff orientation and training purposes. It will depict the role of the adult and adult/child interaction according to the philosophy of WCCC Child Development Center.

Name of Child _____

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX D
NEW STAFF SELF-EVALUATION
OF VIDEO ORIENTATION

	Very Knowledge-able	Somewhat Knowledge-able	Minimally Knowledge-able	Need More Information
I. Physical Features	80%	5%	5%	10%
II. Professional Relationships	81%	9%	6%	10%
III. Educational Philosophy	85%	9%	4%	2%
IV. Teacher Role	82%	9%	6%	3%
V. Procedures & Routines	89%	6%	5%	0%
VI. Teaching Strategies	86%	7%	4%	3%
Average Totals	83%	7%	5%	4%

5. Describe, in your own words, the meaning of the phrase: "interact, don't interfere."

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Procedures and Routines:

6. Tell where to find:

   (a) art supplies _____

   (b) cleaning supplies _____

   (c) snack menu for the week _____

   (d) medicine storage _____

7. Describe the steps used in changing a child's wet clothes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8. What cleaning agent is used to clean:

   (a) toys _____

   (b) furniture _____

   (c) bathroom toilets and sinks _____

   How often is this done? _____

Return this questionnaire to the director.

Your Name: _____

Check one or two that applies

- ☐ Practicum Student
- ☐ Work Study Student
- ☐ Other

Date: _____